Smog Matters:

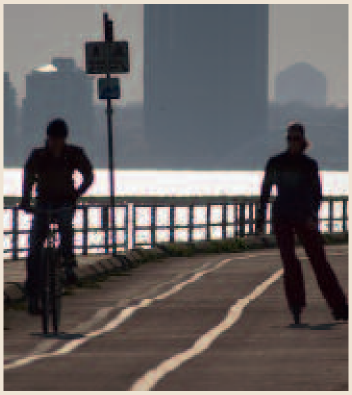
Physical exercise and smog don't mix. Protect your health when air quality is poor.

Air pollution is a year-round problem, but smog levels are generally highest during hot, sunny days from May to September – when we most spend time outdoors. Staying healthy is important, but, you should be aware of some of the risks of exercising outdoors when air quality is poor and plan accordingly.

Smog Affects Your Body

Smog can affect everyone's health, but health risks may increase during high smog levels for:

- Those who play sports or exercise outdoors
- Cyclists
- Runners



When you exercise outdoors, you breathe harder than normal, inhaling more polluted air into your lungs.

This can lead to the following symptoms even in healthy, active people:

- Difficulty breathing
- Chest tightness and coughing
- Headache
- Eye, nose and throat irritation
- Aggravation of respiratory diseases (such as asthma)
- Low energy

For more information on the impacts of smog on your health, visit:
www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/pub/pubhealth/smog.html

In addition to those who play sports or exercise outdoors, other groups may experience health problems at lower levels of air pollution:

- People with lung diseases and heart conditions
- Children
- Pregnant women
- People with asthma
- Seniors
- Smokers



Staying Active During Smog Days

Listen and watch for smog alerts on the news especially during traditional smog season – from May to September. You can also subscribe to Ontario's *Smog Alert Network* at **www.airqualityontario.com** and receive free smog notifications by e-mail.

Protecting our environment. Ontario

*If a **Smog Advisory** is issued in your community, consider tailoring your activities accordingly:*



- Avoid or reduce strenuous physical outdoor activities when smog levels are high, especially during the late afternoon.
- Shift from vigorous activity levels (i.e., jogging outdoors) to moderate or light activity levels (e.g., brisk or slow pace walking).
- Consider exercising indoors.
- Avoid congested streets and rush hour traffic, sources of air pollution.
- Anyone experiencing respiratory symptoms should reduce their level of activity.
- If you experience any breathing difficulties or respiratory complications, contact your physician or go to the nearest hospital.

If you have a heart or lung condition, talk to your health care professional about additional ways to protect your health when smog levels are high.

To find the current air quality in your community go to **www.airqualityontario.com** or call 1-800-387-7768 (English); 1-800-221-8852 (French).

Reduce Smog, Reduce the Risk

Whenever we burn fuel, we create the pollutants necessary to form smog. We burn oil and gas to power our cars and to heat and cool our homes.

Actions you can take to reduce smog:

At home:

- Conserve electricity by turning off lights and the air conditioner when not in use.
- Limit the amount of wood you burn in your fireplace or wood stove and use only the dry, seasoned variety.
- Try manual, instead of gasoline-powered equipment.
- Reduce your use of oil-based products such as paints, solvents or cleaners if you can avoid them. They contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which contribute to smog.
- Ensure you schedule regular car maintenance.

At work:

- Take public transit or walk to work.
- Encourage and facilitate carpooling.
- Avoid traffic congestion.
- Consider teleconferencing instead of travelling to meetings.

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